



# Warriors of God: Richard the Lionheart and Saladin in the Third Crusade

*James Reston Jr.*

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**Warriors of God: Richard the Lionheart and Saladin in the Third Crusade** James Reston Jr.

**Warriors of God** is the rich and engaging account of the Third Crusade (1187-1192), a conflict that would shape world history for centuries and which can still be felt in the Middle East and throughout the world today. Acclaimed writer James Reston, Jr., offers a gripping narrative of the epic battle that left Jerusalem in Muslim hands until the twentieth century, bringing an objective perspective to the gallantry, greed, and religious fervor that fueled the bloody clash between Christians and Muslims.

As he recounts this rousing story, Reston brings to life the two legendary figures who led their armies against each other. He offers compelling portraits of Saladin, the wise and highly cultured leader who created a united empire, and Richard the Lionheart, the romantic personification of chivalry who emerges here in his full complexity and contradictions. From its riveting scenes of blood-soaked battles to its pageant of fascinating, larger-than-life characters, **Warriors of God** is essential history, history that helps us understand today's world.

## Warriors of God: Richard the Lionheart and Saladin in the Third Crusade Details

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# From Reader Review Warriors of God: Richard the Lionheart and Saladin in the Third Crusade for online ebook

## Gary Coon says

A good historical review of the 3rd crusade. The mix of olde style grammar and new slang was weird. Added bonus about Robin Hood thrown in at the end.

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## ???? ???? says

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## Eric says

i don't why but i like Saladin

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## Leli says

Seperti nonton turnamen catur kelas master.

Banyak strategi, diplomasi, perang fisik, perang mental. Catur improvisasi: pion bisa jadi bidak, kuda bisa jadi menteri, raja jadi ksatria, ratu jadi mentri, etc

Cara bercerita Reston enak banget, deskriptif, kronologis, analogi ayat2nya "masuk" ke kondisi saat itu (dan saat sekarang juga) dan berbunga-bunga. Agak lambat di bagian pertama, masuk ke bagian kedua.. ga bisa stop baca.

Waktu baca bagian perangnya, wah.. kaya lagi liat adegan perang di film Lord of the Rings.. tanpa makhluk mitos loh.., seru.. bener2 khayal gerakan2nya.. in slow motion..

Reston ttg Sallahudin, kaya lagi cerita ttg seorang kakak kelas yang cerdas, alim, bijak, mapan, ga berlebihan dan baik hati, disayang guru. Ttg Richard, seperti cowok populer di sekolah, berani, atletis, impulsif abis.. sampe suka ngundang bahaya buat diri sendiri dan romantis..

Ada Philip Agustus, si raja Prancis, yang emosional bgt, keliatan deh dari caranya memimpin Prancis di arena perang, kaya orang lagi pms.

Eleanor.., ibunya Richard, wuih.. feminis yang kuat, yang ngebackup tugas2 Richard di Eropa selama anaknya perang.

Al Malik Al-Adil, jagoan diplomasi, bisa sampe menyentuh si hati singa.

Kaum assasin.., yang terganggu mentalnya, haha

"Beri dia kuda, seorang raja tidak boleh dibiarkan berperang tanpa kuda", kata Sallahuddin sewaktu melihat Richard bertempur di arena dan kehilangan kudanya.

(ksatria dan kebaikan hati)

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## **Ben says**

The only reason I gave this book three stars is that it was entertaining and an easy read. That being said...

The Washington Post called this book "refreshingly unbiased." Nothing can be farther from the truth. The author is obviously biased against Richard. It seems as if Saladin could do no wrong, and was the shining beacon of chivalry, while King Richard was a barbaric, lucky, homosexual. I wouldn't recommend this book to anyone who has little knowledge of the Crusades and the reasons they have been fought.

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## **Ross says**

I'm really split about this book. On one hand, it's a very entertaining description of Richard the Lionhearted's adventures during the Third Crusade, and of Saladin's attempts to defend the Middle East. On the other hand, I feel like the author dramatizes the events far too much, to the point where I'm not sure whether I can trust him.

For example he told a fanciful and eye-opening account of Richard's homosexuality and relationship with Philip of France. I later did some independent research and found out that there is absolutely nothing to support this claim, and yet Reston uses their supposed relationship to justify a number of actions of theirs.

It's still an entertaining read, but should be taken with a grain of salt.

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## **Denerick says**

To be perfectly frank, I don't understand why the author even bothered writing this book. Here are my reasons, which really do need to be structured in this way (Otherwise my rant will be an unstructured melee)

1) Richard the Lionheart is a helpless bugger, isn't he? Everything he does he does wrong or for fiendish reasons. On the other hand Saladin is a Saint guided only by justice, fairness and all the rest. He also takes at face value that he was gay, and most remarkably that he had a gay relationship with Phillip Augustus! What utter nonsense! There is no textual evidence for any of that.

2) His 'criticism' of the sources. I don't understand his internal process for critically evaluating the primary sources but I highly doubt he even has one. Basically I think he looks around the chief narrative sources and try's to fit it all in to a chronology and sequence of events he had pre-structured himself, possibly before he even embarked on the evidence gathering period of his work. A great example is Richard at Jaffa, where he emerges from the sea with a crossbow. There is little evidence for that and the one manuscript which does argue that is decidedly pro-Lionheart. Its all part and parcel of Reston dunning down the history, fitting it all in to his pre-conceived plan of how he thinks the third crusade played out, and throwing it together in a vain attempt to link it to modern geopolitical struggles in that part of the globe.

3) The Saladin worship gets very irritating very early in the book. Saladin was no messiah (Even though personally I regard him as a good man and leader, in the context of the times) Reston even attempts to

portray him as a liberator of slaves after the taking of Jerusalem, where he points out that Saladin and his brother et al 'did their best' to free as many slaves as they could. What nonsense! Saladin clearly had a policy with slaves - the markets in Damascus for slaves under Saladin plummeted due to the flooding of captured slaves in his reign. Slaves literally lost most of their value under Saladin because he enslaved so many people! And honestly, Reston treats us like imbeciles if he really believes he can convince anyone that Saladin disliked having to enslave anyone. This seems to me to be a critical lack of knowledge in his main protagonist.

4) Reston writes very much from the 'great men' school of history. Frankly, all we hear about is the struggle between Richard and Saladin. There was much more to the Crusade than that. I know its in the title but it is intellectually disingenuous to insist on this.

5) Its not even proper history. Its popular history and Reston isn't even an historian. You'd have to be a monkey to take his word on this on face value. Read some of Riley-Smiths, France's, Runciman's work to get a good perspective on the crusades. Keep well away from this sensationalising tabloidesque poppycrap.

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## **Kim says**

A very informative, revealing and well-researched book. The bibliography begs for much further reading.

I was particularly perplexed with the European multi-level complexity within the zeal for the Crusades. With the worldly greed for the wealth in the holy land, it didn't take long for one to see that the principal mission of the Crusades (to liberate Jerusalem from Muslim control) vs. lust, greed are in constant conflict: glory or wealth. Adding to this complexity is the need and subsequent fear on the part of the respective European monarchs (who are related to one another) to keep their respective kingdoms, which included maintaining their royal lines within the dictates of that time, and within Christian dictates/favor, at home while simultaneously trying to fulfill the Pope's principal mission of Crusades. Both the social and Christian dictates did not afford women (save King Richard's mother) status nor influence at the time – women were a means to an end. Finally, when one observes the interpersonal differences, inclinations of the respective European kings, the rivalries imposed on the respective Crusader armies as socially imposed by their respective rulers (Kings and the Pope), the interpersonal complexities make for an interesting mix, against the backdrop of the principal mission of the Crusades.

Juxtaposed within this complicated complexity, is the life and more pious, but not without its own violence, of Saladin, the Muslim ruler. Upon Saladin's conquering Jerusalem peacefully in 1187, Saladin allowed Christian pilgrims to come into the city and worship as they would (page 88), for both religious and strategic reasons. Given the slaughter afforded to the population of Jerusalem in the First Crusade in 1099, I wonder if the Christians would have been mindful, let alone have considered the same courtesy to anyone different than themselves. However, that consideration brings me back full circle to the pivotal point and mindset of Papal Rome and Europe insofar as to the principal purpose of the Crusades: to liberate Jerusalem from anyone of a different culture and religion beyond its/their brand of Christianity. Further reading in particular, begs why the Christians, and subsequently, the Crusaders have an unclear, yet acute problem with the Jews. Ironically, Christianity comes out the Jewish tradition; what is the pivotal problem (beyond obvious differences) between the Christians and the Jews?

Finally, what struck me about the book, but again, reinforces the former points, is the favorable slant toward Saladin versus what is outlined and displayed as the Crusaders' greed and intrigue, cloaked in the principal

mission of the Crusades. However again, this slant, reinforces the intent and perspective as to what the Crusades meant respectively to Christians and Muslims. I also appreciate the broader definition –which bears further reading- on Jihad (page 137), which provides a crucial difference between Christian and Muslim: Jihad involves the struggle of the Muslim to keep the central goal in the battle for Jerusalem, as it is central to Muslim tradition. However, a Muslim IS to also wage war against “sinful inclinations” i.e., greed, lustful nature etc. These seemed reserved from the Muslim side, but outright on the Christian/Crusader side, and at all levels.

Where are you (really) in any endeavor you undertake? What really takes precedence, and why?

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### **Karyl says**

I couldn't even finish this book. I made it page 206, but could go no further. Every once in a while, the action would pick up and I would be interested once more, but in general this book was far too plodding to engage me. I have better books to spend my time on than ones I have to force myself to read.

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### **Lauren Albert says**

I dragged this book out but not for any fault of the book. But because I have a poor memory for what I read, it's hard to write a fair review if it takes me a while to finish a book. I did enjoy it.

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### **Dominique says**

My biggest concern about this book is the argument that the author presents Richard the Lionheart as a homosexual and hee and Philip II of France were lovers. What evidence does the author have of this? My concern there is that how people, especially men, express their emotions has changed over the years; what people said then, we might translate as something only two people in love would say. And I question the research this author has done based on the one passage in the book concerning Robin Hood, a subject that I have read a lot about. The author paints Robin Hood as a nobleman; in the early tales, Robin Hood is a yeoman. Robin Hood was elevated in status to a nobleman in the sixteenth century.

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### **Rachmanovic says**

Buku ini paling bagus pola pandangnya terhadap perseteruan perang Salib. James Reston Jr. benar2 berusaha berdiri di tengah-tengah dengan mengambil literatur secara adil dari dua belah pihak. Dibandingkan dengan kisah film Kingdom of Heaven buku ini paling jujur memandang seluruh detil kejadian di perang salib ke 3. Menggambarkan bagaimana kedua tokoh sentral antara Salahuddin al ayyubi dan Richard saling belajar dan saling mengagumi. Yang paling menakjubkan saya dan mungkin dunia belum mengetahui adalah Richard dengan sedikit memaksa adik sepupunya untuk berjodoh dengan Malik Al Adl. Entah apa yang terjadi jika pernikahan itu terjadi. Buku ini adalah buku barat pertama yang benar2 menggambarkan kebaikan

Salahuddin dengan detil. Dan mengakui bahwa budaya menulis lebih dulu dipunyai dunia timur dibandingkan barat. Buku ini menarik untuk dibaca karena anda akan punya landasan yang baik untuk toleransi dan persaudaraan dengan belajar dari tragedi terburuk dari sejarah manusia yang sama2 mengatasnamakan Tuhan dan keduanya menyebutnya Allah. Dan hal yang kedua yang saya diajarkan Salahuddin dan Richard berusaha melakukan di akhir hidupnya. Memaafkan...

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### **Grace Tjan says**

A reasonably entertaining popular account of the Third Crusade, focusing on the storied relationship between Saladin and Richard Coeur de Lion, the fodder for so much romantic tales concocted by medieval troubadours. However, Reston seems to be unable to decide whether he wanted to write history or historical fiction, resulting in passages such as this:

“These affections were prophesied by no less a figure than Merlin the magician, who proclaimed that “the eagle of the broken covenant shall rejoice in her third nesting.””

(- 1 star)

He also seems to be inordinately fixated on Richard’s alleged homosexuality (“Richard himself, in all the glory of his masculinity and homosexuality, called the Griffones “effeminate”.”) and his supposed affair with his fellow Crusader/ nemesis Philip II of France. Brief googling reveals that there is no consensus between historians regarding the first allegation, and hardly any evidence to support the latter. To analyze any interaction between Richard and Philip through the angle of this imaginary affair is misleading, as well as annoying.

(- 1 star)

The real history is dramatic enough by itself, involving not just the chivalric exploits of the protagonists, but also epic sieges, storm-tossed voyages and savage assassinations (by the original Assassins, disciples of Hassan-i Sabbah’s murderous Ismaili sect, a fascinating topic by itself) --- but Reston’s questionable assumptions and general lack of credible citations make for a highly suspect read. Why not just make a historical novel out of it and dispense with pesky historical facts altogether?

(- 1 star)

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### **Tony says**

Reston, Jr., James. WARRIORS OF GOD: Richard the Lionheart and Saladin in the Third Crusade. (2001).  
\*\*\*. I should know better, but I fall into the same trap time after time. I find a book that deals with the Christian-Islamic conflict – in this case, the Third Crusade (1187-1192) – in hopes of better understanding the roots of this aged conflict, and soon find that I am bogged down in place names that I have mostly never

heard of peopled by a huge cast of characters whose names – on the Arab side – all appear to be either El Melek or Rashid. Then I’m reading about a “historic” battle that only involved eighty knights. Reston is a fine writer, and I’m sure that his intent was to provide a better understanding of the events that have helped shape the present-day ills. But, like so many before him, he is taken over by the minutiae of the period and wants to share all of this with his readers. It doesn’t work. I suspect that the real problem is a lack of a fundamental knowledge of the era and peoples involved on the part of the reader – me. I don’t remember any of my history classes dealing with the Middle-East, even up to current times. The average American reader is at a real disadvantage here. We all – though I’m sorry about the sweeping generalization – are too ignorant about the subject to get much from a book like Reston’s, although he does his best.

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## M says

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## Louise says

James Reston makes history come alive. This is the third of his books that I've read. Each has held my interest and increased my understanding of its respective period.

What makes his work compelling is Reston's ability to draw character portraits. In this book he helps you to understand the issues from the perspectives of both Richard and Saladin. You understand what each is risking and what the rewards for each might be. Reston clearly likes both these leaders. He enjoys their interplay, their gifts to one another and the total irony of their chivalrous gestures.

There are a lot of decisions for a chronicler of the Third Crusade about what to put in and what to leave out. In each of them, Reston decides for high interest and readability. No battle or strategy is belabored or over-analysed. His portraits of other players have interesting and memorable facts. He sticks to the story, though, and avoids the temptation to sensationalize the dysfunction of Richard's family, using only the material that pertains to the Crusade.

This is a fascinating story. The way it is written keeps your attention. I highly recommend this for general readers of history who are looking for a light, entertaining or introductory overview of the Third Crusade.

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## Dana Wilson says

I highly enjoyed this book. He made history and historical figures come alive. I have learned much about this time period through this book and learned a little more about how the early Christians viewed their world along with learning a little more about Muslims; learned about the eternal struggle for who controls Jerusalem. I was able to learn more about the key figures, the personalities, strengths, and weaknesses and



how it affected both the war and the people around them. It is interesting to read how petty jealousy can destroy a lifelong friendship, which in turn starts lies and rumors about the other. It is interesting to read how these rumors and lies are believed by those who are cowards and refuse to find out the truth and blindly follow the jealous coward. This book was easy to read and follow. I look forward to reading more of his books and learning more about Richard the Lionheart, Saladin, Eleanor of Aquitaine, Philip Augustus, and the many others.

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### **Emily Ann Meyer says**

Had I not read Alison Weir's book first, I may not have been quite so turned off by this one, but in contrast to Weir's honest, direct, and balanced historicism, it was clear that Reston had an agenda and his omission of facts (including the fact of Eleanor and his affianced traveling to Italy so he could be married) in order to support that agenda--which boiled down to "Richard was **gay**, isn't that *scandalous*, whisper-whisper, nudge-nudge" really turned me off, and made me pretty much unwilling to read anything else by this author.

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### **Danielw says**

An interesting book although not exactly what I expected. I expected more on the third crusade, and it obviously talks about it a lot but it focuses much more on Saladin and King Richard. The author does a pretty decent job at being unbiased and although the book focuses on the 2 men, Richard gets the lions share of the authors attention. That's probably due more to Richards personality than anything. He's just a more compelling figure to write about. His life was full of drama both in England and in the Holy land. It's a decent enough read but just be prepared for what it really is.

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### **Chris says**

This is an odd duck. Very engaging and exciting, and deeply informative about these two figures. It's remarkably balanced, and I learned a great deal about the political situation in the Middle East at the times. But it's also oddly dramatic and has sections where the writing drops into an odd almost narrative/fictional tone.

Still, worth a read, definitely

[Pardon the finish date, I'm just going through and clearing out a bunch of "currently reading" books from a long time ago]

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